



SUDAN MORNING NEWS

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President Al-Bashir's interview on NBC

- U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack commented on statements made by Sudanese President Al-Bashir to NBC Monday by saying, "It just bears no resemblance to reality." McCormack stated that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has previously visited a camp for displaced people in Darfur and heard the stories of rape and brutality herself: "She (Rice) sat down across from women who recounted awful stories of being brutalized as the result of just going out to collect firewood, trying to — just trying to help maintain the basic necessities of life, cook food for their children. So it's very real. We've seen it. We have heard firsthand accounts of it. And to try to brush these aside as mere fabrications of the United States or others is really just misguided." McCormack added, "The world is not going to stand by and watch the continued humanitarian suffering because the Sudanese government has refused to cooperate with the deployment of AU/UN expanded forces. We have gotten to a point where we need to look, give a good, hard look at what levers we might use at our disposal in order to convince the Sudanese government to change its position." (*Reuters, Al-Ayaam*)

Salva Kiir's Darfur diplomacy

- First Vice President Salva Kiir returned to Khartoum yesterday following his meetings with Chadian President Idriss Deby and leaders of the National Redemption Front in N'Djamena. In his meetings with rebel groups, Kiir emphasized the need to unify positions of Darfurian rebel groups before their meeting in Juba in early April. Kiir is expected to leave for Libya to meet with rebel groups there to unify the negotiations agenda. (*Al-Sahafa*)

UN: International troops in Darfur a necessity

- UN Peacekeeping Chief Jean-Marie Guehenno stated yesterday that the UN will never accept Sudan President Al-Bashir's rejection of a strong peacekeeping operation in Darfur because the conflict is hurting millions of people in Sudan as well as in neighboring Chad, Central African Republic, and even Cameroon. (*Al-Ayaam*)

Consortium donors conference

- Addressing the second Sudan Consortium Donors Conference, Government of Southern Sudan Vice President Riek Machar called for the creation of an environment conducive to private sector investment. Machar stated that donors have fulfilled only 14 percent of the commitments made in Oslo and that has led to difficulties in the implementation of the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement. (*Al-Rai Al-Aam, Sudan Vision*)

Miscellaneous

- Khartoum East Court opened the trial of a terrorist group accused of targeting Western interests in Sudan. One of the three suspects is a Tunisian national. (*Al-Ayaam*)

Quote of the Day:

"It just bears no resemblance to reality." – State Department spokesman Sean McCormack when asked about President Al-Bashir's denial that his government is complicit in atrocities in Darfur.

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